

College Entrance Exam Information

The two most widely accepted college admissions exams for 4-year colleges or universities are the **SAT** & the **ACT**. Many 2 year or technical colleges no longer require the SAT or ACT; instead they use the **Compass** and **ASSET** tests.

What is the SAT? Formerly known as the SAT I, the SAT reasoning test measures general scholastic aptitude in three areas: critical reading, quantitative reasoning, and writing. The critical reading section (formerly known as the verbal section) has two question types: sentence completion and reading comprehension. The Quantitative section covers four main topic areas: arithmetic, algebra, geometry, and mathematical logic – topics typically covered in Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II courses in High School. The writing section of the SAT consists of two parts: a student-written essay section, and multiple choice questions that will measure your ability to identify grammatical errors and improve sentences or paragraphs.

SAT Subject Tests (formerly known as SAT II's) are designed to measure knowledge and skills in particular subject areas, as well as your ability to apply that knowledge. Students take the Subject Tests to demonstrate to colleges their mastery of specific subjects like English, history, mathematics, science, and language. Some colleges specify the Subject Tests they require for admission or placement; others allow applicants to choose which tests to take. Usually selective colleges require these tests.

What is the ACT? The ACT assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The multiple-choice tests cover four skill areas: English, mathematics, reading, and **science**. The Writing Test, which is optional (recommended), measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

What are the COMPASS/ESL and ASSET Tests? The COMPASS/ESL and ASSET tests are assessment tests used primarily by technical and 2-year colleges to place students in postsecondary courses and/or programs of study. These tests help you and your school work together to identify your strengths as well as the knowledge and skills you will need in order to succeed in specific subject areas. These tests help your school guide you toward classes that strengthen and build logically upon your current knowledge and skills. Some 4-year and research institutions may ask you to complete one of these tests to identify skill level in major subject areas in order to place you in the best courses for your skill level. Most institutions give these tests during orientation to incoming freshmen who have already applied and been admitted to the school. Some institutions may require you to take one or more of these tests before enrolling in a particular program or course. Talk to your advisor, counselor or Office of Student Services to determine the requirements and recommendations of your institution. GAfutures provides access to downloadable documents from ACT that provides tips and practice questions for the COMPASS/ESL and ASSET tests.

Clarke Central's registration code number for both the SAT & ACT is 110-115.

Please note that there are a limited number of fee waivers available for economically disadvantaged students to take the ACT or the SAT. Students who qualify for free/reduced price lunch are automatically eligible for a fee waiver.

Preparing for college admissions exams:

We encourage our juniors to take the **PSAT** in October and then use the results of that test to pinpoint where they have strengths and deficiencies so they can prepare for the Spring administration of the SAT Reasoning test. We encourage them to use test prep resources such as: <https://www.gafutures.org/> and www.satonlinecourseschool.com . The 11th grade year is a critical time for students to provide a strong academic showing to impress colleges. They need to focus on their grades and take challenging courses. **No student should take the SAT without taking Algebra II first – the concepts from that course are on the test!**

No single program for test preparation is best for every student – there are simply too many different learning styles for one size to fit all. Ultimately, the best indicator for test preparation is time. **Practice** makes perfect. So, the more times a student has tested themselves under time limitations, the better they will do. Students consistently score better on the SAT/ACT near the end of their Junior year and later, provided that they have been studying an appropriately **rigorous course load**.

<https://www.gafutures.org/> is a great “one stop shop” for students to study for and take practice tests for SAT, ACT, Compass & ASSET tests. Also, www.satonlinecourseschool.com is a FREE resource. Come to the counseling office at Clarke Central High School for further information on how to enroll.

Programs on **strategies** can be just as affective as study programs on content. They cover not just information, but strategies about HOW to take standardized tests. One must understand the rules of the game to show better results. It's like playing a video game – you don't necessarily have to learn where to find all the hidden “treasures” if you know the “cheat” codes the game designers put in so that you can have unlimited extra lives. It doesn't mean that you will play the game any better, but you will have the confidence to move ahead and try new things. There are strategy **books and CDs** available commercially.

There are several SAT content courses available in Athens. They can be expensive, and students offer mixed reviews regarding results from courses like those offered at UGA (\$300+) or KAPLAN (\$700+), but scores do seem to rise with intervention. There is no substitute for practice and rigor. From time to time, Clarke Central offers an SAT prep class for a minimal fee – it is certainly worthwhile. If you are interested in the UGA prep class, go to: <http://www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/youth/test-prep>